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SUBJECT: TAIWAN: TAO SPOKESPERSON REPEATS TAO DIRECTOR'S ADMONITION ON ABOLITION OF NATIONAL REUNIFICATION COUNCIL, OUTLINES TAIWAN TOURISM PROMOTION PLAN

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Summary

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¶1. Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) spokesperson Li Wei reiterated TAO Director Chen Yunlin's February 22 warning that the abolition of the National Unification Council and the National Unification Guidelines would severely damage cross-Straits relations, responding to Taiwan reporters' questions during the February 24 TAO press briefing. TAO and China National Tourism Administration officials outlined the Mainland's efforts to open up the Taiwan tourism market to Mainland residents, noting that the Cross-Strait Tourism Exchange Association has been assigned to coordinate this work with Taiwan tourism organizations. They criticized Taiwan's division of Mainland travelers into separate categories and called on Taiwan to remove obstructive policies. Asserting that the Mainland will continue to take positive measures to care for the Taiwan people, Li argued that the Taiwan authorities' politicized steps have hindered free trade. End Summary.

Beijing Will Remain Vigilant of Chen's Moves

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¶2. During the regularly scheduled February 24 Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) press briefing, TAO Spokesperson Li Weiyi quoted directly from TAO Director Chen Yunlin's February 22 interview with the official Xinhua News Agency (ref), when responding to reporters questions about the Chen Shui-bian's recent remarks proposing the elimination of the National Unification Council and National Unification Guidelines. (Note: The general practice in TAO briefings is for the spokesperson to begin with a prepared statement, which generally reflects the state of cross-Strait relations. Li did not issue a statement and went straight to questions.) He asserted that the Taiwan leadership's moves to promote the abolition of the National Unification Council and National Unification Guidelines are a dangerous sign of an escalation of Taiwan separatists' activities. If the Taiwan authorities insist on abolishing the National Unification Council and the National Unification Guideline, cross-Straits relations will be severely damaged and the fundamental interests of the Taiwan compatriots will be harmed. The Mainland will take sincere measures to maintain cross-strait peace, Li continued. He stated that Beijing will closely follow the development of the situation and prepare to deal with any possible complicated situation at any time. Li said he had no information on whether a special envoy has come to the Mainland to discuss the recent developments.

## Mainland Highlights Taiwan Tourism Promotion Efforts

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¶13. TAO Exchange Bureau Director Dai Xiaofeng and China National Tourism Administration Tourism Promotion Director General Liu Kezhi outlined the Mainland's efforts to open up the Taiwan tourism market to Mainland residents since Beijing's May 2005 approval of the plan. They noted China Tourism Administration Director Shao Qiwei's October 28-November 6, 2006 visit to Taiwan as the head of a delegation comprised of each province's tourism officials and large tourism operators. During the trip, Shao, who visited in his capacity as the Chairman of the China Tourism Association, formally empowered the Cross-Strait Tourism Exchange Association to work with Taiwan tourism organizations to promote Mainland tourism to Taiwan.

¶14. The two officials also listed a number of events that have enhanced contact between the Mainland and Taiwan tourism industries, including the September 2005 Cross-Strait Tourism Exhibition in Xiamen and the China International Travel Mart in Kunming in November, which marked the first time Taiwan representatives attended. The Mainland is encouraging its tourism representatives to attend the International Taipei Tourism Fair in November 2006.

¶15. Liu asserted that the next step in implementing the plan is to encourage Mainland and Taiwan tourism organizations to coordinate the details, especially security measures for Mainland visitors. After a

BEIJING 00003471 002 OF 002

consensus is reached these organizations should sign an MOU or other form of agreement ensuring the orderly handling of Mainland tourism. Liu called on Taiwan to make joint efforts to promote mutually beneficial cross-Strait travel. He noted that the Mainland will soon issue management regulations governing travel to Taiwan and indicated that the Taiwan market will be opened up for Mainlanders from different parts of the country in stages.

## Taiwan Should Remove Obstructive Travel Policies

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¶16. Asked about Taiwan's assertions that the Taiwan tourism market is already open to Mainland visitors, both Liu and Dai criticized Taiwan's division of Mainland travelers into three distinct categories. This system bars the first category, Mainland permanent residents, from visiting, they stated. Liu called on Taiwan to take a constructive attitude toward opening up the travel market and to remove obstructive policies. Dai added that Taiwan will not become an approved destination status until Taiwan permits travel by the first category of Mainland residents. Asked about complications to a recently planned joint entertainment program by Fujian and Taiwan Dongsen Television stations, Dai remarked that it was very inappropriate for the Taiwan authorities to cancel the Mainland delegation's trip just prior to the scheduled departure. He stated that the Mainland tourism delegation led by Shao Qiwei also encountered many restrictions, such as being refused interviews with the local press.

## Mainland Will Continue to Care for the Taiwan People

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¶17. Li Weiyi asserted that the Mainland is making efforts to implement any unilateral plan that benefits the Taiwan people, but it also requires Taiwan to

cooperate and take concrete steps. Responding to the CCTV correspondent's question, he stated that the Mainland's tax breaks on Taiwan agricultural products have led to a significant increase in Taiwan agricultural imports, which totaled USD 3.22 million in 2005. This year the Mainland will take positive measures to care for the Taiwan people's interests. The Taiwan authorities' politicized steps have obstructed the free trade of agricultural products, Li argued, adding that Taiwan farmers will pass judgment on their own.

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